

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 11 June 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Children, Education and Social Care

SUBJECT: Applying Corporate Parenting Principles for Children in Care and Care Leavers

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report is to inform members of the changes to statutory duties for children in care and care leavers and the introduction of seven corporate parenting principles under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members note the seven principles and the revised expectations in acting as corporate parents, and requests that an evaluation of how effectively we are delivering against those principles be undertaken and reported to this board.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces the following seven corporate parenting principles:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

3.2 The principles should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to looked-after

children and care leavers. The statutory guidance gives a number of examples and questions that members and officers should ask in evaluating how effectively we demonstrate we have high ambition and support for children and care leavers who are part of “our family” as corporate parenting.

- 3.3 The statutory duties only apply directly to local authorities but cannot be delivered in isolation from our agency partners who are a central part to play and already have given their commitment to working in partnership with us.
- 3.4 Halton has a good base to work from on how we support children in care and care leavers but we have already made a number of changes in response to the corporate parenting principles.
- 3.5 The Children in Care Partnership Board chaired by the Lead Member for children, young people and families has revised its terms of references to focus more strongly in continuing to deliver improved outcomes. A number of sub-groups have been established on education, employment, housing and support for care leavers, placements and health, chaired by various partners, who are responsible for a work plan and reporting evidence of progress to the board. The Children in Care Council will also report to the Board on issues and matters that are important to them.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

4.1 Children & Young People in Halton

As corporate parents, we have a duty to ensure children in our care are supported to achieve to their best of their ability with their education, physical and emotional health and succeed as adults. The Act strengthens those core principals.

4.2 Employment, Learning and Skills

As corporate parents, we have a duty to support and advocate for our children in care and care leavers to have access to and participate in a full range of education, training and employment opportunities. The Act increases the duty to ensure care leavers are in employment, education or training.

4.3 A Healthy Halton

Children in Care may have experienced a number of issues before care that may impact long-term on their emotional health and well-being which need appropriate support and services in response. If these issues are not addressed, they may act as a barrier to successful outcomes in education and employment and later adult life. The Act increases the duty to identify and respond to those needs including emotional health and well-being.

4.4 **A Safer Halton**

Stable placements and support reduce the risk of children in care becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and crime and also reduce their vulnerability to exploitation.

4.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified

5.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

5.1 The principles will be used by Ofsted to assess how effectively we are meeting the needs of children in care and care leavers.

6.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

6.1 Children in Care will have a range of issues because of their identity and their needs which require an appropriate response and access to a range of specific services as required.

7.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Applying Corporate Principles for Children in Care and Care Leavers www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers		Tracey Coffey Operational Director (0151 611 8790)